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# Is Southern California Running Out of Water?

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*water supply - California,  
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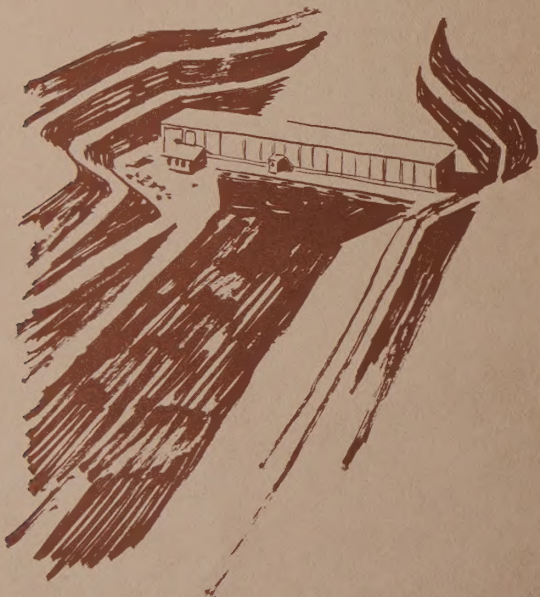
**Metropolitan Water District of Southern California**

*Is Southern California in danger of running out of water in the 1980s?*

The answer, unfortunately, is a very real, "Yes." The reasons why are little understood by the general public—a public that doesn't react favorably to what it may wrongly regard as "scare tactics."

Let's look at the reasons and the sobering facts behind them. Let's see how very solid and compelling they are.

In 1960, the Metropolitan Water District entered into a contract with the State of California for 1,500,000 acre-feet of northern water a year to be delivered



through the yet-to-be-built State Water Project. Before it got its first northern water in 1972, Metropolitan had already paid the State under that contract \$194 million and since then the total has reached \$610 million.

### What's best for the delta?

The contract specified that an integral part of the State Water Project would be a facility to take the northern water around or across the delta of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. That facility is now known as the Peripheral Canal.

Innumerable studies have established the canal as the best way by far to protect the waters of the delta and its fish and wildlife and agriculture against the inrush of the salty tidal waters from San Francisco Bay. For Metropolitan and other agencies with contracts for the northern water, it also represents the best way to maintain good quality water to be transported south. And, further, the 43-mile-long canal is, in effect, a large reservoir that could increase the amount of water available to be pumped to the south by a million acre-feet a year.

It is this last point that now looms so enormously important for the security of Southern California's water supply in the 1980s.



### Cutback on the Colorado

What gives it this enormous importance is another basic fact, namely, that the Metropolitan Water District will inevitably lose more than half its present Colorado River supply when the Central Arizona Project goes into operation around 1985. That's the water that got us



through the drought. There is nothing that can be done about this. The United States Supreme Court in its decree in 1964 in *Arizona versus California* settled that once and for all.

Metropolitan's Colorado River supply will be cut from 1,212,000 acre-feet a year to 550,000. That's a loss of enough water to meet all of the needs of a city the size of Los Angeles.

Taking all this into account, Metropolitan in 1965 increased its allotment of State project water to two million acre-feet a year to make up for most of that loss.

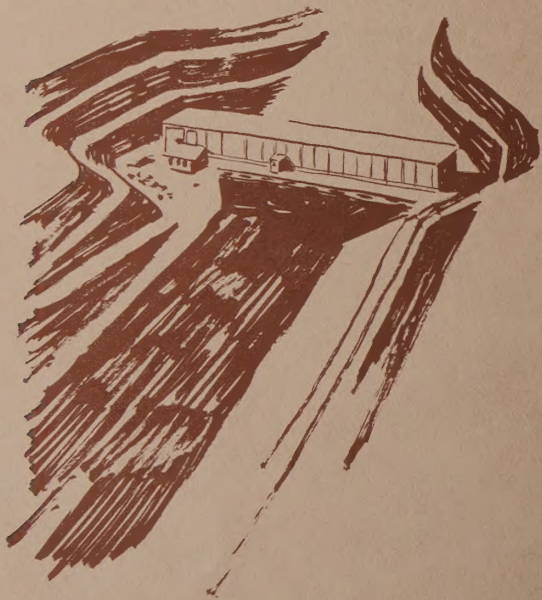


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## Canal must be built

However, the State Water Project is only half completed in terms of supplying all the water that has been contracted for by the Metropolitan Water District and other agencies. The major feature still not built is the Peripheral Canal.

Thus, the State will be unable to meet a big part of Southern California's projected needs for water in the 1980s unless the canal is built. That one million acre-feet annually it can save is essential in meeting the needs not only of Southern California but also those of urban San Francisco Bay areas and San Joaquin Valley farmers.

The question is—can't we save water in our homes and gardens and offices like we did during the 1976-77 drought and make up the difference? We can and should continue to avoid wasteful uses of water. But that can amount to only a small fraction of all that Colorado River water we'll be losing. And reuse of waste water can also only solve a part of the problem. At the same time Southern California's population continues to increase by 100,000 a year.

## The best insurance

Thus, another drought would mean disaster.

After years and years of study and after agreements were painstakingly worked out to meet objections of environmentalists and other interests, the State Legislature fell short by a few votes of passing a Peripheral Canal bill last year. Another concerted effort will be made this year, but, urgent as the need is, success is far from assured.

To repeat, construction of the Peripheral Canal is the best single way to protect our water supply. And even the earliest possible completion of the canal or even a part of the canal may come too late to avoid some shortages in the 1980s in Southern California.

Metropolitan is completing suggested legislation designed to ensure the construction of the Peripheral Canal and related delta protection facilities and we will be asking for your help very soon.

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